

The voice of Kalimpong

Himalayan Times

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Launches
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EDITORIAL

Politics may be a dirty word and we at Himalayan Times have shunned it like plague ever since we came into being. But then there is no denying the fact that Politics in a democracy like ours, is inseparable from society and we in this publication cannot avoid this topic for ever. This piece though not about politics is about a Politician and you guessed it – it's about Mr. Subhas Gheshing.

Ever since he earned prominence after the Gorkhaland uprising in 1986 he has been in the center stage of Politics on the region and whatever he says or does makes news. He manages to evoke massive response both in the groundlevel as well as in the media- on the ground level his supporters implement all his whims & fancies and in the media - those who oppose him earn headlines.

Mr. Gheshing despite being in my opinion the most recognizable face in the last 150 years of Hill Politics has earned more bad press than any other politician ever in the Hills. The amount of media bashing he gets is just unprecedented. He definitely has managed to earn more bad press than anyone else in the history of hill politics. I don't ever remember anything goods written about him especially in the English Print media. What I ask here is that, is all the media bashing he gets really justified??? Is he so bad or are his policies so bad that he deserves all the bashing that he gets?? If yes, then how come his word is as good as law and how come he has been sweeping elections after elections for the last 16-17 years?? How come life in the Hills comes to a stand still on one word from him??

My take on this issue is that Gheshing despite his several many short comings is still seen by the masses as someone who can deliver the goods. He is still seen as someone who managed to give the Gorkha community in India a national identity, after all he is the one who brought us the Hill Council and he will probably be the one who will get us the status and benefits of a Tribal Area. The recently concluded Assembly Polls being a testimony of his sway over the masses. He is still seen as someone who has done for the hills more than any other leader ever from the Hills.

While opposing the ruling party and its leaders is part of democracy- I feel appreciating its achievements too is part of a good democracy. While many of Gheshing plans & policies may be faulty and deserves opposition lets at least give the man some amount of credit for his contributions to the Hills.

Dear Editor,
The news item "Death before births" in Vol II, Iss 14 of your magazine indeed made for some chilling reading. Being a mother of two, I fail to understand how any mother could be cruel enough as to kill her very own fresh & blood.

Learning from the article that this was not the first of its kind incident in the locality is really shocking. It seems to appear that something "fishy" is going on somewhere close by and what is even more shocking is that the authorities have not done any thing about the same. My guess is that there could be a clinic or *Dai Maa* in the locality who performs illegal abortions and if so it should be investigated. Life is a gift of God and no person has the right to take it. People who indulge in such a crime are not just criminal but down right inhuman.

All parties in this episode – the mother, father, people who were involved in the abortion and these connected in suppressing the incident should have no place in our society- the right place for them is in Jail.

Mrs. Sweta Pradhan
Kalimpong

Dear Editor,
While it is true that our government machinery is always a laughing stock as far as efficiency is concerned- this time around it deserves a large amount of kudos at the way it has conducted the Assembly Polls.

The extreme efficiency with which the elections were held is testimony to the fact that if the government wants it really can function efficiently and in a proper manner.

We the public would be so happy if this efficiency that the same "Office Babus" exhibited during the elections are exhibited during other times too.

My congratulations to them on free and fair Polls.

Pradip Tamang
7th Mile
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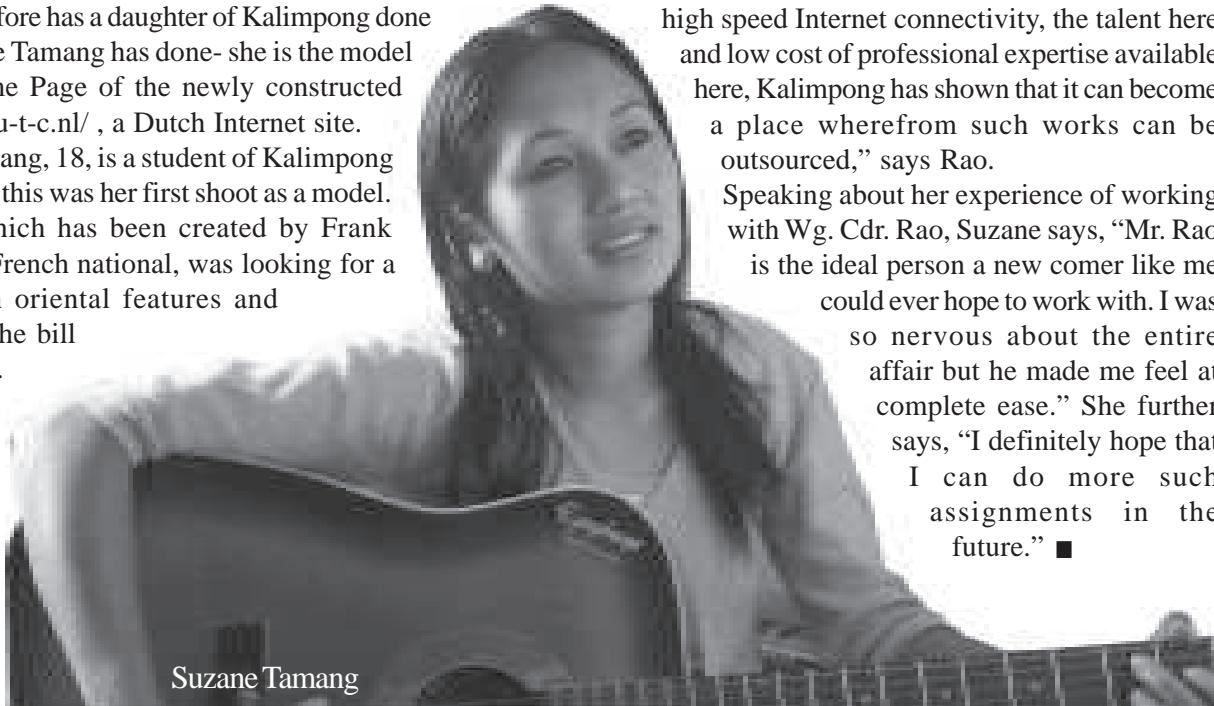
■ Sandip C. Jain

This definitely is a first for Kalimpong- of course a daughter-in-law of Kalimpong Karen Pempa Hishey(daughter in law of the late T.P.Hishey) has launched many a products in the print media and has to her credit the tag of being the first Liril Girl of India- Of course a son of Kalimpong, Imran Ahmed (son of Mumtaz Ahmed) has launched several Ad campaigns, the most famous being the one for Smart prepaid cellular connection of Reliance Telecom Ltd; but never before has a daughter of Kalimpong done what Suzane Tamang has done- she is the model on the Home Page of the newly constructed www.2006.u-t-c.nl/, a Dutch Internet site. Suzane Tamang, 18, is a student of Kalimpong College and this was her first shoot as a model. The site which has been created by Frank Mueller, a French national, was looking for a model with oriental features and Suzane fit the bill perfectly.

Says Suzane, "I was approached by Wg. Cdr. Prafulla

Rao to do the shoot and realizing the opportunity, I grabbed the offer with both hands." Wg. Cdr. Prafulla Rao is an acquaintance of Frank and is a highly talented and proficient amateur photographer. "Frank wanted to launch the Web Site with a model with oriental features and approached me with the request. Suzane was a perfect choice," says Rao. This probably is the first instance when such a work has been outsourced to Kalimpong. Now with the high speed Internet connectivity, the talent here and low cost of professional expertise available here, Kalimpong has shown that it can become a place wherefrom such works can be outsourced," says Rao.

Speaking about her experience of working with Wg. Cdr. Rao, Suzane says, "Mr. Rao is the ideal person a new comer like me could ever hope to work with. I was so nervous about the entire affair but he made me feel at complete ease." She further says, "I definitely hope that I can do more such assignments in the future." ■



Suzane Tamang

ART & CULTURE

GITANJALI NOW IN RONG FLAVOUR

Gurudevs connection with this quaint little town is old – it was on 25th September 1940 that he made broadcasting history by reciting live over the telephone his poem, “Baran” on the AIR from Gauripur House in the upper reaches of the town. Besides Kalimpong was also one of his favourite summer retreat where he spent many of his vacations.

Now almost seventy years later, as a tribute to this Noble laureate, a part of his most famous work, Gitanjali, has been translated and transliterated into the Lepcha language by Ren. P.T.Lepcha, a native of Kalimpong.

Rev. P.T.Lepcha, the General Secretary of the Indigenous Lepcha Literary Association and a retired employee of the Central Intelligence Department and an acclaimed Lepcha scholar, has translated 17 verses out of the 103 verses of “Gitanjali” into the Lepcha language in an effort to introduce this internationally appreciated collection of song to the Lepcha Community. This book by Ren. Lepcha has each verse written four times, once in the original form, the second is a translation in Lepcha, the third and fourth are transliterations in Lepcha & Bengali.

Speaking to Telegraph, Ren. P.T.Lepcha says, “It is my honour that I could make an attempt at trying to translate the most famous work of one of the biggest literary figures of all times. Although at the moment I have been able to translate only a part of this great work, I hope to translate the entire collection, God willing and time permitting.”

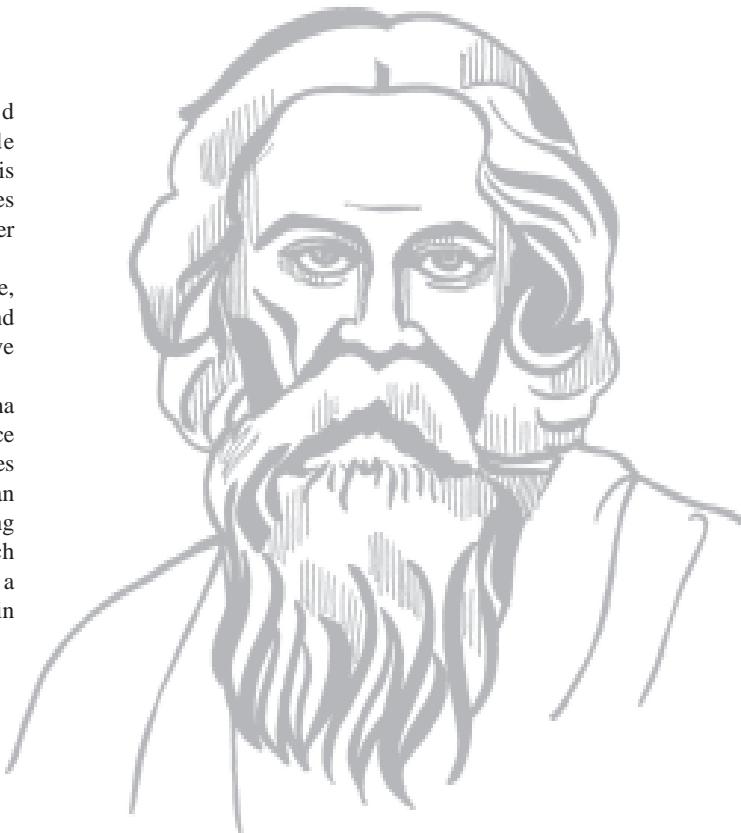
This book was released by Prof. D.P.Pattanayek(former Director of the Central Institute of Indian languages, Mysore) in Kolkata at the Asiatic Society, Kolkata during a three day National Seminar on North East Indian Language and Literature.

Mr. L.S.Tamsong, General Secretary of the Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association, who has written the forward to the book says, “It was Mr. S.K.Bhowmick of Midnapore who suggested we take up the project and Ren.

P.T.Lepcha was most enthusiastic about the project. I am sure this effort will open up scopes for further translation and transliteration works between the different languages in India”. Gitanjali definitely is one of the masterpieces in Indian literature and is still read worldwide though its popularity amongst the youth of today, specially in the Hills, is not what this collection of songs deserves. Ren. Lepcha's work is an effort to correct this.



**Ren. P.T.Lepcha
Bhasha Samman Awardee**



While Gurudev meant this collection of songs to be an offering of songs for his lovers,(Gitanjali means an offering of songs), this effort by the Lepcha scholar sure is an offering of tribute and respect for the Noble Prize winner.

Ren. Lepcha is also a recipient of the Bhasha Samman Award 2002 which is given by the Sahitya Akademi of India. ■

A VERSE FROM GITANJALI

The song that I came to sing remains unsung to this day. I have spent my days in stringing and in unstringing my instrument.

The time has not come true, the words have not been rightly set; only there is the agony of wishing in my heart.

The blossom has not opened; only the wind is sighing by. I have not seen his face, nor have I listened to his voice; only I have heard his gentle footsteps from the road before my house.

The livelong day has passed in spreading his seat on the floor; but the lamp has not been lit and I cannot ask him into my house.

I live in the hope of meeting with him; but this meeting is not yet.

Well, well, well the long wait is finally over very soon- Kalimpong will get ADSL broadband. From a trickle of data thru the age old dial up systems, Internet will come zapping down on the BSNL DATA ONE connections - and thank God for it.

As many of you may have observed, with the penetration of broadband all over the world, web pages have become glossier and are loaded with flash, sound and multimedia which necessitates a fast connection to fully enjoy the benefits of the Internet. Many of us have for the past year or so have been using DIAS (Direct Internet Access System) which was a huge leap forward; but with broad band, internet speeds will literally go ballistic.

But just what is broadband? Well, TRAI defines it as Internet speeds of 256k and higher ie roughly 4X the speed of a 56k modem and the costs will vary depending on the amount of down/upload and the scheme one has opted for.

And the advantages:- MANY...For the schools and educational institutions, many free multimedia based teaching aids should be accessible (Have a look at www.visionlearning.com and Google Earth to see what I mean). Then if you wish to pay, much more educational stuff should be available from University sites. Also a whole host of online facilities such as banking, buying and selling (www.baazee.com), reservation of air/rail tickets etc should be possible from the snug comfort of your home. Video conferencing will become a reality, as will downloading mp3s and even movies!



Broadband at last

By Wg. Cdr. Prafulla Rao

The dangers:-
One of the real dangers of broadband is that you may become the target of a hacker. With dynamic IP and poor connectivity / speeds this was difficult on the dial up system but now that you are on ADSL and for extended periods, it's a different ball game altogether. So get your firewall up and running (configuring a firewall is a nightmare but just get onto Windows XP, Service Pack 2 and switch on the firewall) and check out how secure you are from www.grc.com (take the free "shieldup" test).

The second big danger I personally see is an explosion of porn - especially in internet cafes since it is no big secret that you do not require a credit card or password to get the most explicit porn on the net. But a word of caution to all broadband users:-

wherever you go on the net you are leaving your fingerprints (IP address) behind and most of the time you can be traced.

You are also more susceptible to spyware and virus/ worms on broadband so keeping sensitive information on your computer maybe dangerous. A study conducted in the US revealed that 2 out of 3 broadband users were not secure.

Having said all this I am more than thrilled that broadband will be here soon since I have lived with the agony of an internet connection which crawled, for too long. I honestly believe that the Internet is one of the great things that has happened to man and having it blazing away makes it all the more meaningful. So get yourself those 80GB monster hard drives and click down your favorite MP3s all in minutes! ■

AIDS

AND THE AIDS

BOMB

By Sandip C. Jain

There is a bomb scare in the Darjeeling Hills- but this bomb is not the type which bursts with a deafening sound and causes instant death and destruction. This one is a silent one where death and destruction is slow but sure – its called the Aids bomb!!!

In a recently concluded survey carried out by the National Institute of Cholera & Enteric Diseases(NICED), the Darjeeling region has been classified as a High HIV prevalent area. This comes as a big shock to those who thought that the Darjeeling area was a relatively less risk HIV zone.

As per the findings of NICED Darjeeling has a HIV prevalent rate of 15.8% in comparison the state average of 5.6%. This makes the district the most highly HIV prevalent area in West Bengal. Even Kolkata has a prevalence rate of 9.6%. This calculation is bases on the number of HIV positive persons per hundred in the high risk group. As per the scale any area with a prevalence rate of less than 5% is classified as a low risk zone, if it is more than 5% but less than 10% then the area is a medium

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prevalent zone and any area having a prevalence rate of more than 10% is a high risk zone.

As per the NICED, the survey in Darjeeling area was covered on a sample size of 696 persons.

Considering the fact that even a state like Manipur (which is considered as having one of the highest number of HIV patients in India), has a prevalence rate of about 19%, the situation in the Darjeeling region indeed is alarming.

'KALIMPONG FAMILY GROUP' ~HOPE FOR TROUBLED FAMILY:

Drug abuse and Alcoholism are pervasive problems in today's society, disrupting the life of the drug abuser/alcoholic and destroying family relations. The daily stresses of living, coupled with family pressures or problems, may lead to drug abuse/alcoholism by one or more individuals as their means of 'coping'. To change or relieve the distressing effects in the family and exploration of the behavior patterns of all the family members is necessary.

Al-Anon and Family Anonymous (FA) is a Twelve-Step, self-help support group of families of drug abusers and others with behavioral problems.

When a young person is in trouble, the whole family is also in trouble and need help. The purpose of the group is to help the family, not the drug abuser or the alcoholic. Members include parents, relative and friends of drug/alcohol users, run-a-ways, chronic truants and social drop-outs of all ages.

There are group meetings in almost every state and developed town. At meetings, members come to realize that they are no longer alone. They can learn how families in similar situations have dealt with similar situations and problems.

Members use first names only to preserve anonymity. The programme is of spiritual nature, not religious. Anyone who may think that they will benefit from the Al-Anon/ FA meeting is welcome. No prior appointments are necessary.

Al-Anon / Families Anonymous is a non-professional, non-profit organization which does not solicit or accept outside funding.

There are no dues or fees.

A combined Al-Anon and Families Anonymous group has been established in Kalimpong.

Known as the 'KALIMPONG FAMILY GROUP' we meet every Saturday at 3:30 p.m. (for one hour) at Kalimpong Park Hotel. For more details please contact: 98320 96611 or 98320 94741.

Thanking you,

Amode Yonzone.

Udeshya – Kalimpong Family Group,
Kalimpong.

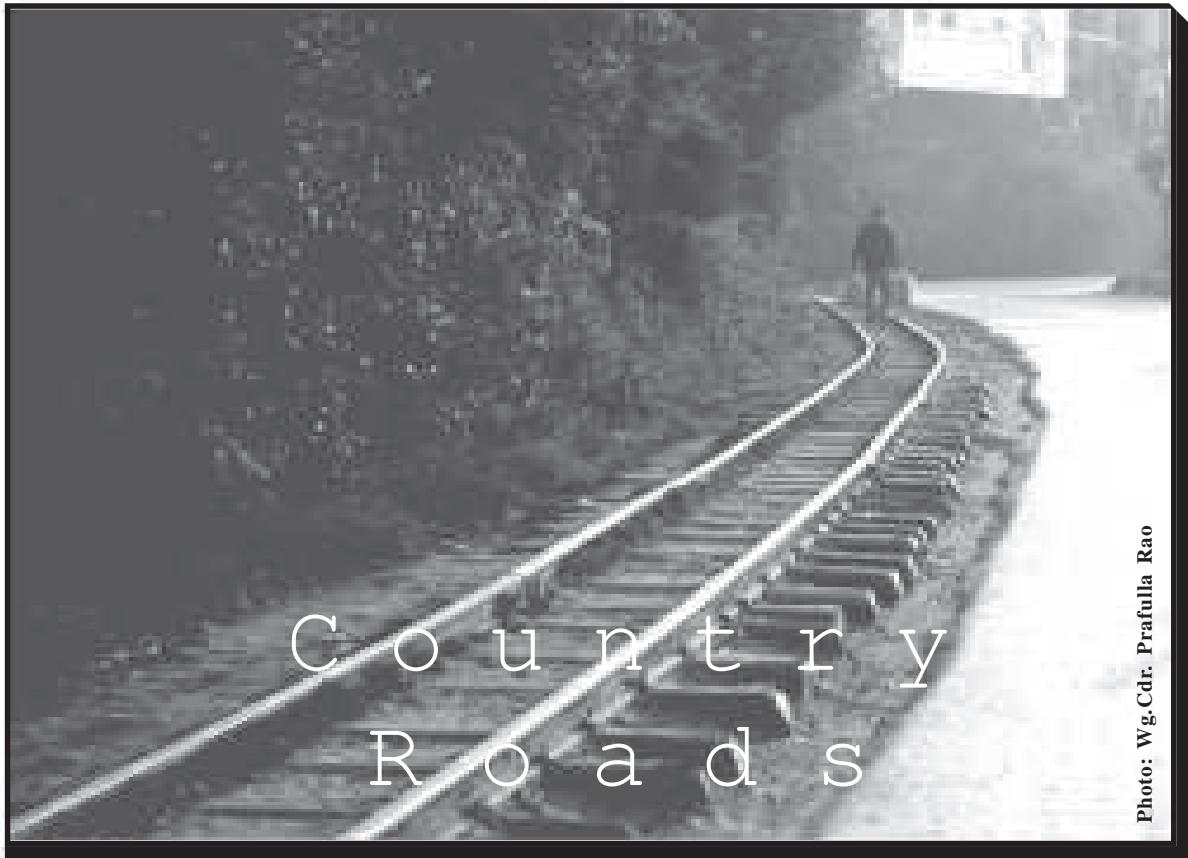


Photo: Wg.Cdr. Prafulla Rao

By Preeti Pradhan

Kalimpong- the name derived from a local tribal language as we all know means “the black spur – the ridges where we play” Since long Kalimpong has been a favorite tourist spot due its pleasant weather, pure air and the warmth in the attitude of the residents. But lately things have changed argumentatively in and around kalimpong! There is so much pollution that the notion of inhaling a breath of fresh air is impossible (thankfully thought in a lesser degree than cities). The ridges where our ancestors played on has now traumatically been transformed to a congested and filthy area, streets reek with filth and wastes are generously collected over the corner of roads....so leave

alone playing in the ridges it has become impossible to simply walk through the streets peacefully with cars honking continuously from the back scaring you off your guts! The constant swearing of the drivers at pedestrians with remarks as “morchaas” (meaning you’ll die) in a rude accent vice versa thereby creating series of verbal warfare has in my view broken down the notion that the residents having warm attitude so accordingly the warm attitude can be redefined as ‘hot’ and ‘fiery’ attitudes.

With the increasing number of cars every empty street has been turned to parking zone and the more larger areas have been transformed into motor stands! Which in effect has caused tremendous amount of inconvenience in every way simultaneously causing pollution of all sorts. This has consequently endangered the ecological

balance most importantly causing variations in weather. Which we all have been experiencing so again the notion of pleasant weather is broken with the uncertainties and extremities in the weather now. To make matter worse, for the DGHC, Kalimpong clearly stands out and remains the under privilege daughter comparatively amongst the other districts!

Focusing on the roads in Kalimpong which leads to Bung Busty, Rousay Bazar, Pramtam Road, Delo, Durpin, almost all the roads in and around Kalimpong leading to important Tourist Spots all demand attention. These roads hold huge pot holes and unleveled road causing you nausea and lumps with the number of times you get to bump your head inside the

car to reach to these places teamed with the reckless driving of young drivers. This habituated topsy turvy drive in and around Kalimpong consequently causes me each time to react frantically and strangely to the leveled and smooth drive down to Siliguri starting from Teesta.

So you see our part of the bargain to walk peacefully and drive smoothly in and around Kalimpong has been lost. The authorities only give a temporary dose of relief with the grandeur leveling and pitching of these roads which pitifully starts dilapidating faster than the time taken to pitch – creating even larger pot holes than before. Substantial damage has been caused mainly by the heavy and increased number of vehicles plying on these roads which our councilors say have been generously done even though with the limited budget, seemingly done working HAND-IN-HAND with “efficient” “CONTRACTERS”

aih! Not only the main roads draws attention but recently the trails in Hat Bazaar looks as though it is an excavation site! A wisely foolish way to stop traffic from entering Hat Bazaar! People on busy market days are so concerned on tip toeing over these to save spraining of legs that they forget to see and stop by for vegetables. Everywhere we go curse saying “h yaha ko batoh tah yastai cha” meaning that the roads are always bad. This is literally and figuratively a great test of endurance. The reaction to the roads here are all the same yet we still retain our tolerance and have made it more ritual to go through these bumpy trails.....Will situations improve will our tables turn? Well the solutions to these problems seems inexplicably unclear.....so until we see the dawn of improvements and witness some upgrading programs for OUR betterment, we have got to fasten up our seat belts and keep rocking all along the bumpy trails! Kalimpong has all the attention drawing factors the roads are just one amongst the many!!! ■

Dear Readers,

Seeing the popularity of Himalayan Times in Darjeeling and the ever increasing demand from our readers there, we have decided to print a six page section on Darjeeling from the next issue onwards. All those who wish to contribute articles from Darjeeling may contact

Mr. Saikishor

Ajit Mansion, Chowrasta,
Darjeeling

Phone – 9832018819

F U T U R E O F K A L I M P O N G



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By Vimal Khawas

Jogis



all of a sudden, awoke from my tired sleep on one of the midnights of October 2005. After completing a daylong field survey in a nearby tea garden, to enjoy deep lazy sleep was all I could be entitled with. However, an uncanny sound followed by high-pitched noisy bark of uncountable dogs in the vicinity forced me to come out of my utopian berth. Few seconds of careful listening and I made it. It was a Jogi performing his usual customary chore. That is that; it is not new to me. I have been hearing this uncanny sound followed by numerous indecipherable *mantras* during the midnights of a particular day of particular month since my childhood. I, however, never thought

of exploring as to why Jogi performs such a difficult job during the dark scary moonless nights, the meaning and significance of such performance etc.

At about 8 am in the morning before I was free of my morning chores, a voice '*Jai Goraknath*' greeted me. He was the same man who produced series of uncanny sounds in the midnight. He had come to collect the fruit of his wakeful service. I secretly made up my mind to explore the significance of his midnight venture and few other associated details. Our conversation enlightened me with some interesting ethno-cultural information of which I was debarred from, all these years.

Jogi-s or what people also locally address them, as *Pheriwala-s* across Darjeeling-Sikkim Hills and Nepal is one of the ethnic groups belonging to a larger Nepali/Nepalese community. They believe themselves to be the loyal disciples of Lord Shiva or what they also call *Goraknath*. They have a total of 64 *bhairungs* (sub-tribe) out of which only 12 *bhairungs* are entitled to be *pheriwala-s*. Meaning thereby, only 12 sub-tribe of Jogi are culturally given to practice this customary duty. Therefore, all *Pheriwala-s* are Jogis but not all Jogis are *Pheriwala-s*.

It was Lord Shiva who sent them to this world, as *Goraknath* knew the world is featured with innumerable evil spirits. As the loyal disciples of *Goraknath* it is their duty to protect human beings from the evil spirits characterising the world. In this connection they set out for their rounds in the mid-night as it is believed that evil spirits are active during the period. They visit every household in a village or a particular region and blow *Sankha Dhoni* with the help of a horn of an animal locally called *brat* (an animal belonging to deer family). In the process they produce a series of uncanny sounds supported by spiritual *mantras* often hard to decipher by an ordinary soul. One *Pheriwala* visits one pre-demarcated village/region. There is no overlap in the performance i.e. no two *pheriwala-s* perform in the same village in a same night. There are, however, cases when two *pheriwala-s* perform collectively. In that, one of them would be a junior or a disciple who would be learning the lessons of *pheri phuknu* (blow) and the associated *mantras* from his senior or master.

Pheriwala-s usually perform their age-old customary duty during *chayit* roughly corresponding the months of mid March – mid April and *Kartik* i.e. mid October – mid November. They believe evil spirits are most active during these two periods and as the ardent disciples of *Goraknath* they are bound to protect the human beings from their evil objective of negatively influencing the everyday human life.

They collect alms or what they also call it *daan* the very next morning from the individual households of the village/region where they perform. They do so for the *nau grah santi* (peace to the nine planets of the solar system) of the members of the households. They believe, they have the power to carry along with them all the planetary problems of human being inflicted upon by different locations of nine planets revolving around the solar system. They offer sacrifice to their *Sankha Dhoni* to keep their instrument active and effective for the cause. The sacrifice is usually offered during the Nepali/Nepalese calendar of *asthami* or *noami*.

Superstitious it may sound *pheri phuknu* is one of the important ethno-religio-spiritual attributes in force across both rural and urban spaces since time immemorial. Rustic hill folks often wonder as to why *Pheriwala* did not visit their houses if, by chance, a particular village or a region is left out during the period. It is strongly imbibed within the culture of Nepali speaking households across Darjeeling, Sikkim, and Nepal.

Further, Jogis also play a role of traditional ethno-spiritual faith healers. There are numerous instances when the people to heal their ailments have called

them. Examples abound across the hills of Darjeeling and Sikkim where Jogis have cured paralysis, epilepsy and other forms of diseases.

Nevertheless, the present young generation Jogis and those that are yet to come may not be quite interested to carry forward this odd profession. Jogis themselves feel that they have been gradually deviating from their historico-cultural attribute over the period of time. Education and other associated postmodern forces have been playing important role in this connection. Truly, as the whole of human species is entangled in the process of development, Jogis/*Pheriwala-s* cannot be an exception. *Pheri Phuknu*, apart from being a ritual, custom and tradition of *Pheriwala-s*, is one of the prominent ethno-religious assets of the larger Nepali/Nepalese community. We must not lose this asset as we proceed ahead in the spectrum of development dynamics. ■

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THEIR WORDS OUR VOCABULARY

By Dr.S.B. Wangyel

In this piece we will consider some really strange entries into our vocabulary. We will travel through Japan, Iran, Portugal, China and then come back to India. Let us begin with the word 'rickshaw'. It comes from three Japanese characters which read as 'jin-riki-sha' that translate as 'man-strength-cart'. This figurative term obviously stands for 'man pulling a cart' and as the term traveled from Japan to distant shores, the first part 'jin-' got phased out giving us our 'rickshaw'. There was a time when rich British people would go for walks around the Mall in Darjeeling with a 'rickshaw' behind them. It was a way of flaunting that in case the well-heeled person got tired he had the means to head home in comfort. For the next word we go to Iran during the era when it was called Persia. It is strongly believed that the word 'shamiana' came from there. We often use a 'shamiana' during marriages because own equivalent, the 'tambu' or tent, is restrictive since it is closed from all sides while the former is open. 'Shamianas' are easier to set up and can be had in relatively large sizes which add to their popularity. In the ancient days when the Shah traveled to distant parts of his province, courts were held at the places where he stopped and this consisted of a large tent-like canopy of cotton but with open sides. The Shah sat at the centre, the Persian for which is 'miyana' so such a court came to be called 'Shah-miyana' or 'shamiana'. Our next stop is Portugal from where we got our word 'padri' sahebor the Christian clergyman. The Portuguese word is 'padre' and it was only applied to the Roman Catholic priests but very strangely, despite most countries honouring that convention, we and the rest of India see and accept any Christian clergyman as a 'padri'. From Portugal we travel to ancient China, the home of tea. The character representing a tea plant in the Mandarin is pronounced as 'tay' from which we got 'tea' but we are more concerned with the Nepali 'cha'. It is difficult to believe that the word 'cha' or 'chai' could be from outside the subcontinent but that is the truth. One of the earliest record of 'cha' in English language is in the English Glossary of 1671 where it is mentioned that it was once spelt as 'tcha' and that it was derived from the Cantonese. In the introduction to Marco Polo's Navigationi e Viaggi we read of a Persian trader, Haji Mahomed, who visited Venice and had drunk 'Chiai Catai' or the 'chiai of Cathay.' Tea has become a mode of greeting visitors in our homes but of almost equal popularity is 'khorsani' of which we have so many varieties. The word is believed to be related to the Persian province of Khorasan which produces saffron, asafetida, and various aromatic gums. This lead me to my favourite spice which is not just a seasoning but as an illustration of our ingenuity and wit in crafting new words. So, having gone through Japan, Iran, Portugal and China we now come home with 'akbaray khorsani'; that small, teeny-weeny seasoning that carries so much pungency that it burns both the ends of those who eat it. Hats off to our ancestors so aptly named it after Emperor Akbar, the Mughal ruler at Delhi, who like the 'khorsani' was not big but carried one hell of a punch as supreme ruler of India. □



The Tibet Mirror Press

The Tibet Mirror

THE FIRST TIBETAN NEWSPAPER—
NOW ONLY A MEMORY

Once a potpourri of flourishing trade and hub of secret agents from Britain, Tibet, China, India, America's CIA and probably other countries, Kalimpong seems today a mere worn-out town where every one is only catching up on their lives.

"After Tibet lost its independence (in 1959), Kalimpong's importance also diminished. There was no more trade between Tibet and India under Tibet's new ruler, and it (Kalimpong) was no more of any political significance," says 76-year-old Phurbu Dhondup, an elderly Tibetan living in the town. It was then the Tibetans brought wool to India, while on return they carried all kinds of household goods—you name it, you have it.

It was here that the first Tibetan newspaper was born. "The Tibet Mirror Press; Established 1925", reads the sign board on the crumbling tinned house, near the 10th Milestone (doesn't exist now though) on Giri road.

Albeit the first Tibetan-language newspaper, called "Ladakh ki Akhbar" (Ladakh's Newspaper), was published in 1904 by a Moravian missionary in Ladakh, the Tibet Mirror was truly the first Tibetan newspaper for its content and its mission: to educate the Tibetans.

Tharchin, the editor and publisher of the paper, made much effort to report on affairs of the world, to educate Tibetans and to encourage the opening up of Tibet to the changing modern world. He reported and commented on the imminent dangers of the approaching Chinese invasion.

Prof. Dawa Norbu later stated, "It is no exaggeration to say that if the ruling classes in Lhasa and New Delhi had heeded what Tharchin Babu was saying, Tibet's modern fate might have been different."

Yulchog Sosoi Sargyur Melong (Mirror of News from All Sides of the World) was the original Tibetan name of

the Tibet Mirror. The first issue of the newspaper came out in October 1925. The issues came out at irregular intervals.

The newspaper chronicled an important era of Tibetan history including the looming communist Chinese invasion of Tibet, and started a new wave of literary activism in Tibet often pitting the conservatives against the reformists of that era.

"It was my grandfather who did all the work of the newspaper. He selected the news from the newspapers he subscribed to and translated them for the paper," David Tharchin, grandson of Tharchin, explained from what he knew about his grandfather.

Of the fifty initial copies, most were sent to his friends in Lhasa, including one to the 13th Dalai Lama. The 13th Dalai Lama became an ardent reader of the paper and encouraged Tharchin to continue with the publication, at least to educate him about the changing outside world. The current 14th Dalai Lama inherited the subscription of the late 13th.

However, the paper came to an end in 1962, and Tharchin died in 1976. "My grandfather was getting too old to continue the paper, and my father was not interested in it," David recalled.

Tharchin Babu's only son, Sherab Gyamtsho Tharchin passed away on the 5th of this month at the age of 70 after a brief illness with lung complications. He was survived by his wife and seven children. David Tharchin, the second son, provided all the information about Tharchin Babu.

A few paragraphs in this piece will not do any justice to tell about mighty Tharchin Babu. A work in two volumes has



Babu Tharchin (1890-1976)

been published on the life and times of this formidable personality by the author Herbert Louis Fader. The books are directly available from his family home in Kalimpong. Contact: David Tharchin. Email: david_65in@yahoo.com

Tharchin was a Khunu native in Himachal Pradesh, born in Poo village in 1890. His full name was Gergan Dorje Tsering Tharchin, and he later came to be known as Khunu Tharchin Babu by Tibetans. He was baptised as a Christian by Moravian missionaries in the region, but retained his Tibetan name.

The story of Tharchin Babu, a journalist and pastor, does not stop with the Tibet Mirror. He, along with his second wife, Margaret Tharchin, had also started an orphanage in 1962. Today there are about 40 children in the children's home. The home has a budget request also. If interested to get a copy of their brochure or to sponsor a child, contact David at the same email id as above.

Today, there are about 2700 Tibetans living in Kalimpong, including five Tibetan clusters whose jurisdiction falls under the Kalimpong Tibetan Welfare Office.

There are two schools for Tibetans. People's main livelihood is from their various businesses including hotels and restaurants. They also make noodles, incense, phing (glass noodle) and traditional Tibetan boots, which are exported all over Tibetan settlements in India.

Nepali is the chief language of almost all the Tibetan youngsters here. Tibetan is not spoken and in many cases Tibetan is already an alien language for them. They prefer to use Hindi or





The sign board of the Tibet Mirror Press, which published the first Tibetan newspaper in 1925, on Giri Road, Kalimpong.

English to converse with Tibetans from outside.

"We know we (people from Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Gangtok) are called 'To ro ro ro' (for 'broken Tibetan with Nepali accent') by other Tibetans, but our quest for a free Tibet maybe is stronger than theirs," says Ola, a youth.

"We do not have political events here but we actively participate when a call comes from Dharamsala," Ola added.

There are 10 monasteries in Kalimpong. One of them—Tharpa Choeling (also Samten Choeling in Darjeeling)—is known to be propitiating Shugden.

Ola was forthright with his mind and beliefs. He admitted that he propitiates Shugden, the deity the Dalai Lama denounces.

"Our family have been believing in the deity for generations. How can one quit it all of a sudden," Ola says.

The acts of the cadre of the Tibetan Youth Congress, storming into peoples homes and destroying the images of Shugden, was a bitter experience for Ola.

"Forcing on people was not the way to do and that's not democratic either. And because of such acts China got a tool to exploit from the situation."

"His Holiness the Dalai Lama is still my supreme leader and he is my root spiritual guru," Ola says.

To ward off the melancholy of the town, a walk with a camera loaded with a black and white roll would alleviate your mood, as classic black and white photo ops of an old town are plentiful in Kalimpong. ■

**THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN REPRODUCED
FROM THE INTERNET**

FOOTPRINTS IN THE HIMALAYA

PEOPLE, PLACES & PRACTICES
BHUTAN, DARJEELING,
NEPAL, SIKKIM & TIBET

Sonam B. Wangyal

ARRIVING SOON

About is a collection of essays. It is designed as a journey over the Himalayan region, but unlike a regular travelogue it is haphazardly spread over several centuries, without following any time sequence. The reader is the traveller and the journey commences in England with the story of a man who takes a most hazardous trip to the Himalayan and perishes in the cold and insensitive snows of Mount Everest, never to return to his English soil. The journey rounds off with another Englishman, who having lived most of his fruitful life in India, heads home to England, never to return to the Himalayan vicinity. From Mount Everest the path leads to Darjeeling, Sikkim, Nepal,

Bhutan, Tibet and back again to Darjeeling. It then hope to the tea plantations in the foothills (Dooars) and finally ends with the above mentioned Englishman, a tea planter, leaving for England, which is where our narrative or the journey commenced, making it a kind of a round about journey. All the proceedings in the tour are based on true-life events spanning many centuries and they touch history, religion, politics, culture, simple anecdotes, human failings and achievements.

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Review

"Dr. Sonam B. Wangyal is eastern Himalayan region's one of the most prolific writers in the English language. He has been a regular contributor to major journals like 'Himal', 'The Himalayan Magazine' (Kathmandu), 'The Statesman' (Nbplus Siliguri edition), 'Himalayan Times' (Kalimpong) and numerous other journals, souvenirs, directories and related materials. Besides his recent successful book on Sikkim and Darjeeling this collection of some of his essays is a wonderful reading that generates humour, sadness, surprise and occasionally ever manages to startle the reader. I thoroughly enjoyed it from the first page to the last."

Buddhiman Yonzone

Central Committee Member All India Nepali Bhasa Samity
Bharatiya Nepali Rastriya Parishad

FACTS ON KALIMPONG

Role played by Scottish Missionaries in developing medical infrastructure in Kalimpong

The Scottish Missionaries felt that they should not only save the soul but also heal the physical body of native people also. With that burden and vision Dr. and Mrs. J.A.Graham started the small and temporary hospital with the help of native missionaries in the Mission Compound. With the help of simply medicines they were able to help the needy patients. The catechists who gathered month by month at Kalimpong from their far off stations used to carry some medicines with some knowledge of the treatment so that they become more effective preachers in their places. Later this hospital was named as "Charteris Hospital" after the name of Rev. Dr. A.H. Charteris, who first influenced the development of the Guild Mission in Scotland.

Rev. D.G.Manuel describes, "The government had given half the cost and

the women's Guild the other half. It first opened its doors on the 22nd January 1894.

Dr. C.F.Ponder, in charge of the Charteris hospital stated the aim of the hospital as, "Let everyone of the heathen who comes hear of the story of the savior's love".

In 1897, a new dispensary was opened at Pedong Bazar, about thirteen miles away from Kalimpong town. At the beginning the government gave a house and grant of money and St.

Andrews Young Mens Guild, Calcutta, agreed to pay the yearly salary of Dingbu, a Lepcha catechist cum compounder who had just finished his training under Dr.

Ponder in the Charteris' hospital.

These medical works became one of the most important elements for spreading the gospel. They also opened small dispensaries in other places like Nimbong Busty, Today Busty and Teesta Bazar.

**Source- A study of the Scottish Mission Work in Kalimpong Sub -division with special reference to the Lepcha Tribe by Rev J.P.Sada.

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Expression!!!

THE GAME OF LIFE

By Rahul Sinha

They call to her from across the street
But they don't know her name
Who's to blame ?

She wonders how to changes
The life she's living
She wonders if she'll ever get away
As for as I can see,
the writings on the wall
There's no return, we live, we learn
The game goes on and on....

DREAMS AND DEATH

Kritika Pradhan

They say, "Those who dream the most,
do the most'
So, each day we try and work hard
To reach up to our anticipations
But the harsh reality of life is that-
Dreams rarely come true.
I'm not discouraging anyone
I don't have that immunity.
But one thing we ought not disregard
Is the requisite of the will of God.

The world is full of nasty people
But if we have faith in God
He indemnifies us from everything evil.
Inspite of all the ups and downs in life.
A ray of hope is left behind.
And this is what we ought to do.
Never give up and strive till we thrive
Because certainly our happiness lies
In the achievement of our dreams!!

How to Identify Cities in India

KOLKATA

Two guys are fighting and a third guy comes along, then a fourth and they start arguing about who's right. You are in KOLKATA.

MUMBAI

Two guys are fighting and a third guy comes along, sees them and walks on. That's MUMBAI.

DELHI

Two guys are fighting and a third guy comes along and tries to make peace. The first two get together and beat him up. That's DELHI.

AHMEDABAD

Two guys are fighting. A crowd gathers to watch. A guy comes along and quietly opens a chai-stall. That's AHMEDABAD.

CHENNAI

Two guys are fighting. A crowd gathers to watch. A guy comes along and quietly says that "amma" doesn't like all this nonsense. Peace comes in.

CHENNAI.

BANGALORE

Two guys are fighting in a market place and a third guy comes. He writes a software program to stop the fight. But the fight doesn't stop because of a bug in the program.

THAT'S BANGALORE.

GOA

Two guys are fighting. Third guy comes along with a carton of beer. All sit together drinking beer and abusing each other and all go home being friends. That's GOA

PUNJAB

Two guys are fighting. Both of them take time out and call their friends on mobile. Now u are in PUNJAB

GANGTOK

Two guys are fighting. Two females (one each side) make an appearance and join the fight. Soon it is the two girls slugging it out with the poor guys trying to separate them. You are in GANTOK.

KALIMPONG

Two guys are fighting. Soon a crowd gathers and stands around the two guys chanting "Dhey" "Dhey"!!!
You are definitely in Kalimpong.....

Brain?

Teasers

1 .

He played football for the Mohan Bagan Club.

Now is a School administrator. Name him.

2 .

He was the missionary who introduced Lolipops to Kalimpong. Who was he???

3 .

This ex student of St. Augustines' School is the lead guitarist for a famous musical band in New Delhi. Who is he???

4 .

Identify this famous personality of Kalimpong who passed away recently.



Answer the above question correctly and send in your entries to us by the 8th June, 2006 to win a sleek

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jumble jumble

MARAHINA

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RUBLLNUT

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LEACHMIST

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PESTOWINT

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(hint: Schools in Darjeeling)

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Complete the above Jumble and send in your entry with the coupon given below by the 8th June 2006 to win a free lunch for two at **Soods Garden Retreat, Kalimpong**. The correct answers for the jumble published in the last issue are

LAWAN, THOMAS, DR.SPRIGG, PARASMANI & HALIMA SARWAR

The winner will be decided by a draw of lots. The names of all those who sent in correct answers for the jumble in the last issue are Dinesh Kalikoty, Sonam Dolma, Leksang Sherpa, Suresh Goel, Binod Pradhan, Sushma Pradhan, G.P.Sharma, Manohar Rai, Shiva Sunar, Sandeep Sharma, R.T.Lepcha, Anu Thoki, Suniima Bagdas, Tshering Yangchen, Lakpa Yalmo, Reema Bhitrikoty, Animesh Pradhan, Sarita Gurung, Siddharta Pradhan, Shivendra, Shalini Thapa, Umesh Subba, Shoba Giri and the lucky winner is –

Navin Kumar Sharma of 13th Mile, Kalimpong

Please submit your entry in a plain sheet of paper alongwith this coupon. Please do not tear this page to submit your entry.




Chef's Corner
By Chef Meena Pradhan

Phapar ko Phuraulo.
Phapar - 250gm.
1 onion chopped finely
Water to bind the flour
Salt to taste
Oil for frying
Method

Put Phapar & onion, mix with salt and water to make a thick batter. Heat oil, put small portions with a spoon, deep fry, turn over drain in a napkin & serve hot with chutney or sauce.

Sinsnu Ko Phul

Boil water put sinsnu in low flame cook till tender.

Ginger/ Garlic paste -

Salt to taste -

A dash of turmeric

mustard oil - 6 tablespoon.

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Serve hot

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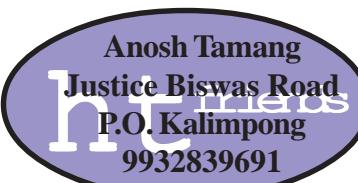


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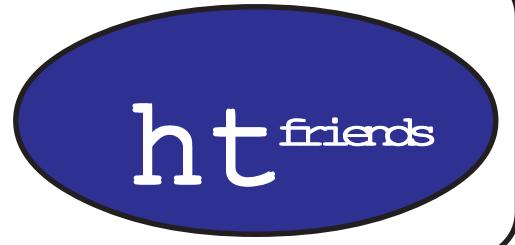
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nostalgia



Photograph courtesy Kalimpong Stores(Kodak) and available for sale



A view of Mela Ground in the 1940's.

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